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Residual U.S. Military Forces In Europe

By Don M. Snider

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Don M. Snider

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LAND WARFARE PAPER NO. 11, AUGUST 1992

RESIDUAL U.S. MILITARY FORCES IN EUROPE

by Don M. Snider

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FOREWORD

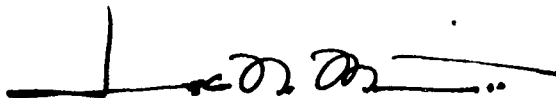
The 1992 U.S. National Military Strategy includes forward presence as one of its four foundation stones, the others being strategic deterrence and defense, crisis response, and reconstitution. While forward presence can be demonstrated in various ways, actual deployment is the strongest statement of our commitment.

The entire question of forward positioning of U.S. military forces has become a subject of both public and congressional debate, the issue being justification versus cost. The present Department of Defense plan is to cut U.S. forces in Europe to 150,000 by the end of FY 1994, but there are enormous pressures to reduce even more. The same considerations also pertain to the rest of the world, primarily in the Pacific area.

Don Snider addresses the subject of Europe directly within the framework of U.S. military strategy. He presents a military analysis of the roles and missions U. S. forces will be expected to execute in the future, and alternative force levels and organizations to meet those needs.

The paper envisions a period of several years of political-military transition within Europe. Residual U. S. forces such as those discussed in this paper should be planned carefully from the bottom up and be in place toward the end of the decade. Other force options are possible, but, regardless of exact composition, it is clear that the United States must maintain a force in Europe for the foreseeable future. As Snider notes, the United States must have stability in its visible presence if it is to pursue its own national interests under the new U.S. national military strategy.

Though Don Snider's Land Warfare Paper focuses on a U.S. military "presence" force in Europe, the rationale for clear roles and missions and their relevance to U.S. military strategy can be applied to other geographic regions as well.



JACK N. MERRITT
General, USA Ret.
President

August 1992

RESIDUAL U.S. MILITARY FORCES IN EUROPE

by Don M. Snider

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore in depth the issue of residual U.S. military forces in Europe. The analysis proceeds from two premises: First, any residual U.S. forces in Europe should be designed to fill certain roles in the political context, as well as to execute certain military missions. Any discussion of the need for future residual forces should focus on these particular roles and missions and should do so in the context of U.S. interests. Affordability will always be an issue, but it is a secondary consideration. Second, future U.S. deployments overseas should be designed with a clear conception of the newly approved U.S. military strategy. That strategy should guide the development and employment of U.S. forces worldwide, Europe not excepted. In particular, planning under the new strategy should focus on the specific missions that forward "presence" forces are to accomplish, and U.S. forces should then be structured uniquely within each region to accomplish those future missions. In the context of these premises, this paper focuses on the necessity for a "capable corps" as part of U.S. residual forces in Europe.

The Current Debate: Summer 1992

The Bush administration has requested funding for a withdrawal plan that would reduce U.S. presence in Europe to 150,000 by the end of fiscal year (FY) 1993. Congress, particularly on the House side, has indicated a strong desire to reduce further,¹ even as they have accepted the administration's judgment that the reduction cannot proceed faster than currently is being executed. Thus, the issue remains one for decision and implementation in FY 1994 and beyond, after the current drawdown to the 150,000 level is completed.

This issue of residual U.S. forces in Europe is only one portion of the larger discussion in the U.S. policy community over future defense capabilities. The political debate thus far in 1992 has focused almost entirely on the preferred size of the post-Cold War U.S. force structure, or the "Base Force," as the administration has labeled it. Within that largely quantitative debate, the focus of attention has been on those forces to be employed, under the new military strategy, for "crisis response" missions. Without a consensus on future threats to U.S. security interests, much energy has gone into debate on force-sizing these crisis response forces against various expected, but largely undefined, adversaries. Decisive power projection against regional adversaries, as was done in the Gulf War, is now considered the *raison d'être* of the general purpose force structure of the United States, and that is where the debate has centered, both within the administration and in its dialogue with Congress.

In proper strategic context this is a very myopic debate. Missed almost entirely is the other principal use of general purpose forces under the new U.S. military strategy, that of forward presence. It is this presence role which now provides the primary mission for residual U.S. forces in Europe, as well as those stationed or operating in every other region of the globe.

Use of Military Forces for Forward Presence

Under this strategic concept — one of four organizing principles in the new U.S. military strategy — the day-to-day presence of U.S. forces in regions vital to U.S. interests contributes to averting crises within the region by demonstrating visibly a strong U.S. commitment to its interests located there. Simply stated, the willingness to “plant a flag,” or at least on occasion to “show the flag,” demonstrates national resolve in a manner that cannot be conveyed by public and diplomatic communications alone.

During the Cold War a similar concept of forward deployed forces was used which, of course, gathered much political baggage during the intra-alliance debates in the late 1980s over sharing the financial burden for such deployments. Unfortunately, the similarity in name between the two concepts has caused significant confusion as to the real purpose of military forces employed in the future under the new concept, including those remaining in Europe.

In the past, forward deployed forces were stationed overseas to defend U.S. interests directly and decisively by military action, usually in conjunction with allied forces. Of course, in preparing for the military mission of defense, U.S. forward deployed forces were deterring by denying Warsaw Pact commanders perceived success in their offensive plans. Through the years U.S. forces practiced the defense mission annually with well-publicized, combined exercises. In Europe, REFORGER exercises brought combat reinforcements, both air and ground units, from the United States to forward defensive positions within Europe, many on the old inter-German border. A similar exercise, TEAM SPIRIT, annually demonstrated U.S. resolve to defend the Korean Peninsula. Now, however, this degree of resistance — to defend — is no longer applicable because there are no extant adversaries to defend against. Robert Gates, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, recently testified: “My brief characterization of these forces is that the threat to the United States from {the conventional and strategic forces of the former Soviet Union} has all but disappeared for the foreseeable future.”²

In sharp contrast to forward deployed forces for defense, the new role of forward presence forces, properly understood, is not to defend U.S. interests directly but to provide leverage for diplomatic and economic instruments of policy. They do this by creating, for adversaries and allies alike, the perception that the United States is strongly committed to the preservation of its interests in each region of the globe.³

Forward presence recognizes the strategic implications of global integration and interdependence — the relevant choice for great powers now and in the future is either to influence global events, or to be influenced by them. Forward presence also recognizes the increased importance of nonmilitary instruments of power relative to the military. Because foreign states have less need for U.S. defensive protection, exports of U.S. security no longer command such an attractive price. On the other hand, the United States does have strategic interests abroad, many vital, and in our own self-interest we need to visually reassure both allies and competitors that we will stand by our interests. Whispered innuendoes that the United States is “going home” can fuel false perceptions. Thus, in the language of deterrence theory, these forward presence forces communicate locally and regionally the credibility of our national commitments in the context of a very interdependent world.

Thus the role of forward presence forces, quite in contrast to deterring by actively defending U.S. interests with military means, is to preclude the necessity for their active defense ever having to occur. To the extent that they are successful in their role of communicating the credibility of U.S. resolve within each region, the probability of using the much-debated crisis response forces will sharply decrease. If forward presence forces are perceived as representing the forward edge of a seamless U.S. response in which decisive crisis response forces will be projected into the region from the continental United States (CONUS) (see figure 1), then they will, in conjunction with our allies, successfully preclude or defuse potential crises.

Cooperative Use of Force		Competitive Use of Force	
To	Show U.S. commitments regional interests Lend credibility to agreements Enhance regional stability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploit opportunities • reduce proliferation Promote influence access Provide linkage for crisis response	To	Deploy rapidly Exercise forced entry Flight jointly or combined Win quickly/few casualties
Goal	<i>To shape</i> regional security environment	Goal	<i>To react</i> to the regional security environment
By	Forward stationed forces Prepositioned equipment Joint/combined exercises Security assistance Peacekeeping operations Humanitarian relief activities Nation-building activities Developing civil-military relations	By	Responding to crisis Projecting military power Executing traditional military mission

* Only two concepts—Forward Presence and Crisis Response—of the four main strategic concepts are depicted here. The other two concepts are Strategic Deterrence/Defense and Reconstitution.

Fig. 1. Concepts of U.S. National Military Strategy and Relationship to the Use of Force*

That U.S. forward presence forces are no longer needed "to defend" in Europe does not mean that these forces can be unprepared to fight, to execute traditional military missions. It simply means, as is documented in NATO's new strategy, that the aim now is regional stability and the management of crises rather than defense from invasion. Clearly the best way to achieve this is to have ready, capable forces — both U.S. and allied — appropriately designed to the cooperative uses of force noted in figure 1, thereby providing credible U.S. "presence." Or, as stated by General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Although the numbers of U.S. forces stationed overseas are being reduced significantly, the credibility of our capability and intent to respond to crises will continue to depend on maintaining forward presence forces capable of joint and combined operations.⁴

If forward presence had occurred successfully in the Gulf War, the war could have been "brilliantly deterred" rather than "brilliantly fought and won."⁵

Forward Presence in Europe

Given that the primary future role of U.S. forces in Europe, as in all other regions in which the United States has interests, is to provide presence as defined by the new U.S. national military strategy, what additional roles are also appropriate for U.S. forces so employed, and how best might these forces be structured and stationed?

In addition to a U.S. forward presence, a second role for these residual forces stationed in Europe is to fulfill explicit U.S. commitments to NATO's military force structure. Under the recent revisions of both political and military strategies, the member nations of NATO are now committed to filling out a multinational force structure of three echelons.

Although some NATO command structures are still being finalized, it is clear that the United States is currently committed to provide the following from its residual forces in Europe:

- to the initial Immediate Reaction Force: a battalion-sized airborne force, currently stationed in Italy as part of the Southern European Task Force (SETAF);
- to the Rapid Reaction Force: a combat aviation brigade and other support units, all now stationed in Europe, committed to the British-led ACE Rapid Reaction Corps; and

- to the Main Defense Force: a U.S. corps of two divisions, all stationed in Germany, the nucleus of which would form a U.S.-led multinational corps, and one division of which would be attached to a similar German-led multinational corps.

A third role for residual U.S. forces in Europe also has been advanced by the administration, that of projecting U.S. military power as "contingency response" forces out of the European region to crises in neighboring regions. The dual-use role of U.S. European-based forces is also supported by many other knowledgeable analysts, academics and former government officials.⁶ Such a capability would be an alternative to deploying similar U.S. forces and capabilities from the continental United States to a regional crisis.

The precedent for this role is, of course, the U.S. response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent Gulf War. In that instance, when U.S. troop strength in Europe was more than 300,000, the 70,000 personnel of the U. S. VII Corps were moved out of Europe through the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) and deployed (mainly by sea) to Saudi Arabia. Although this deployment was ostensibly a unilateral move by the United States and did not require NATO approval on the "out-of-area" question, the deployment was only possible with the extensive support of NATO member governments and alliance civil and military agencies.⁷

Thus, there are three roles that have been advanced for the residual U.S. military forces in Europe. To fulfill these three roles the administration has testified repeatedly that a force no smaller than 150,000 is necessary. This figure is based on the belief that a "capable corps," with associated air and maritime support, is the minimum-sized combat formation capable of fulfilling these roles.⁸

These roles, however, should not be confused with military missions. U.S. forces can execute any number of different missions within these roles, missions such as peacekeeping operations, humanitarian aid activities, or more traditional military activities such as opening lines of communication or defending facilities or territory. As the United States learned in 1983 in Beirut, U.S. military forces operating overseas in a presence role without a clearly defined mission constitute a recipe for disaster. Thus, the analysis in this paper will focus on both roles and missions and on the appropriate composition and size of force needed for both.

Force Levels and Their Implications

Notwithstanding the administration's view that 150,000 is the minimum-sized force, there is every indication that a smaller, more austere force is highly probable, if not in 1994 then only a few years hence. Even defense supporters such as Senator Sam Nunn

have called for reducing the number to "well below" 150,000, noting that the "the old Cold War operating tempos of our forward deployed forces can ... be reduced, saving operating costs and extending the life of weapons systems."

In this context two questions become relevant: (1) Because the administration's case is based on the concept of a "capable corps," as reductions proceed below 150,000 at what level will a threshold be reached where it will no longer be possible for a "capable corps" to be credible, either in Europe or to be projected from there; and (2), considering a much more austere residual force at some point in the future, which of the three postulated roles are still feasible?

The remainder of this paper will explore three hypothetical force levels, discuss their implications for the accomplishment of the three roles, and recommend a residual U.S. force level for Europe. The empty cells of figure 2 will be filled in with the results of the analysis, as can be seen in figure 10. The analysis draws implications beyond the size of the residual force, focusing also on the preferred composition and location of the force to best execute in the future the posited roles.

Force Levels			
Roles	Base Case:	Threshold Case:	Future Case:
	150,000	120,000	75,000
Provide U.S. Forward Presence			
Support NATO Mission (NATO Region)			
Project U.S. Crisis Response (Out of Area)			

Fig. 2. Analysis Matrix

The Current, Planned Force Level

The current administration envisions that the forces in figure 3 will compose the residual force.

Army	92,200
Air Force	44,800
Naval Forces	13,000
<hr/>	
Total	150,000

Fig. 3. The Current, Planned 150,000 Residual Force

The ground component of 92,200 can be further disaggregated into the “capable corps” — composed of two heavy divisions, an armored cavalry regiment, an artillery brigade, a combat aviation brigade and other combat and support units necessary to corps level operations — as well as the Southern European Task Force (SETAF) and miscellaneous headquarters and support units located throughout Europe.

	Personnel
Capable Corps	72,200
• Headquarters	
• 2 Heavy Divisions	
• 1 Armored Cavalry Regiment	
• 1 Corps Artillery Group	
• 1 Aviation Brigade	
• Plus Combat Support & Service Support Elements	
Southern European Task Force	1,900
Headquarters & Headquarters Support	18,100
<hr/>	
Total Requirement	92,200

Fig. 4. Ground Component of the 150,000 Residual Force

The corps formation, though needing more than 72,000, is the smallest army formation capable of conducting the full range of required missions at the operational level of warfare. It represents the force level at which integration of air and ground operations

within a theater is designed to occur under current joint doctrines, facilitating full use of the capabilities of both theater air and land forces. This "capable corps" formation also facilitates U.S. commitments to NATO multinational forces, as noted earlier.

On NATO's southern flank in Italy, SETAF is a tailored organization of 1,900 designed to maintain logistics depots and theater-level stocks in peacetime and to expand in war into a theater support command to provide logistical support for forces operating on the southern flank of NATO and throughout the Mediterranean area. It also has a small combat contingent, a battalion-size airborne task force that, as noted, is part of NATO's Immediate Reaction Forces.

The third portion of ground forces, some 18,100, is structured to staff both U.S. and NATO headquarters and to provide various types of support throughout the theater to all U.S. forces and their 120,000 dependents, residing in 12 military communities (area support groups). Much of this support is on a regional rather than service basis, whereby support units such as medical services, military police, transportation, Defense Department schools and so forth provide support to all U.S. personnel in a given geographical area. This has eliminated most redundancies in the theater support base, providing only minimum support for U.S. families deployed overseas for three or four years at a time.

The air component of the planned 150,000 residual force would be structured with 45,000 personnel, as illustrated in figure 5.

Type of Aircraft	# of Squadrons	Mission
F15C/D	2	Air superiority
F15E	2	Interdiction/strike
F16C/D	4	Multirole fighter
A10	1	Close air support
U2R	1	Reconnaissance

KC135
E3A
C130
Etc.

Rotational Support
Force

Fig. 5. Air Component of the 150,000 Residual Force Level

Totaling over three wings of combat fighter capability with associated support, these forces would be divided between bases in the United Kingdom and Germany. Given the rapid self-deployability of air forces, they could be quickly augmented with additional capabilities from the United States, tailored to the needs at hand. This component is also of sufficient size to sustain, as required, forward operating bases on NATO's southern flank or deploy to nearby regions such as North Africa or the Middle East and to sustain combat operations as part of an "out-of-area" force.

Naval forces ashore in Europe, under this and all following options, will total 13,000, composed primarily of U.S. and NATO maritime headquarters and support facilities such as naval air stations. This total does not include the 8,000 to 10,000 naval personnel normally serving with a forward deployed U.S. carrier battle group and amphibious ready group. Nor does it include those naval personnel and ships deployed in NATO multinational maritime formations.

There is little doubt that this force can fulfill all three roles mentioned earlier; it has been designed by the administration explicitly for that purpose. As noted earlier this year by General John Galvin, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe/Commander in Chief, Europe, this European portion of the administration's "Base Force" provides the United States with a smaller but viable force with which to "demonstrate our commitment to NATO, insure regional stability, provide a hedge against uncertainty, and maintain the infrastructure and logistical support for reinforcement or operations elsewhere."¹⁰ The last role noted by General Galvin requires further amplification, however.

The administration has made a strong case that residual U.S. forces should be able both to execute the European forward presence role and to project force out of Europe into another region in a crisis. Furthermore, the administration argued that because this involves a crisis response mission, "a corps of two divisions is the minimum Army force suitable for this purpose."¹¹ Is it any faster, however, to deploy U.S. contingency response forces from Europe to another region rather than from the continental United States? Is there a military rationale for such a deployment based on proximity?

Assuming for purposes of discussion that Egypt was the country to which deployment was desired, figure 6 shows the alternative travel times by sealift.

The difference in deployment times is four days, a considerable amount of time in terms of crisis management. Still, it is very likely that factors other than time at sea would more strongly influence whether or not it is preferable from a military perspective to deploy U.S. crisis response forces from CONUS or Europe. Based on the Gulf War experiences, three general factors stand out: the amount and timeliness of host-nation support in Europe; the time necessary to marshal sealift assets at U.S. and European ports from the sources available; and the time required to move forces and equipment from U.S. installations to port facilities.

Point of Embarkation	Destination	Distance (NM)	Days of Travel
S.E. U.S. (Charleston, Galveston)	EGYPT (Alexandria)	6,000	12.5
S.E. U.S. (Charleston, Galveston)	GERMANY (Bremerhaven, Hamburg)	4,800	10.0
GERMANY (Bremerhaven, Hamburg)	EGYPT (Alexandria)	3,700	8.0

Fig. 6. Deployment Transit Times

Because forecasting with accuracy how these factors will manifest themselves at the time and location of unknown future crises is not possible, drawing on the lessons of the recent past is advisable. Three specific points can be made:

- One of the principal lessons learned from the Gulf War was the logistical dependence of U.S. forces, which was largely offset by coalition logistical support, particularly as forces arrived in the regional theater;¹²
- While the U.S. VII Corps was moving out of Central Europe through the Benelux countries to ports on the English Channel or in northern Germany, U.S. forces did not receive from allied countries as high a priority for movement as was desired, slowing the effort considerably, and this was in a contingency generally supported by allied nations;¹³
- When the VII Corps was deployed, another U.S. corps in Europe was used extensively in stevedoring and other logistical functions; in essence it "took a corps to deploy a corps." The second U.S. corps in Europe has since been deactivated. In future scenarios, U.S. forces will have to rely even more extensively on allied cooperation and logistical assets, which in the case of a U.S. decision to act unilaterally may not be rapidly forthcoming. Any such tendency would negate the very small advantage of deploying from Europe.

In sum, there is only a small time advantage in deploying from Europe and many unknowns, all of which mitigate against a conclusion that a U.S. corps stationed in Europe is, in fact, "closer" to potential deployment sites in the Middle East than a corps located in the southern United States. The same may not be true, however, for smaller formations in Europe that are not so dependent on rail and sea transport.

It would be advantageous in terms of political signalling and leverage for U.S. forces in Europe to be able to respond rapidly, and unilaterally, out of Europe to a crisis region. The leverage this applies is immense, if for no other reason than that ministers and assemblies cannot ignore such public use of U.S. force from their territory, though it is not always welcome in political circles on either side of the Atlantic. As will be seen, however, the maritime and air components, which are in many respects better suited for this role because of their inherent deployability, will be retained in the smaller residual packages, maintaining for the United States these capabilities for leverage.

The Threshold 120,000 Force Level

At some point as forces are drawn down, a force level is reached at which it is no longer possible to maintain credibly that a "capable corps" is stationed in Europe and deployable from there. What is that level?

Based on design characteristics of army force structure, maneuver elements of corps (divisions) and of divisions (brigades or regiments) can be detached and stationed apart from the parent formation and rejoin it or another comparable parent unit for combat. This is not preferred because the units lose some training familiarity; but it is sustainable so long as training simulations and exercises are jointly held to maintain the collective proficiency of the larger unit.

Under such a stationing plan, each of the two divisions in the 150,000 force could be reduced, retaining only one subordinate maneuver brigade each in Europe. Further, the division support base and the corps support base could be similarly trimmed. Thus, the original corps personnel figure of 72,200 could be reduced to roughly 59,000. When 18,000 personnel still needed for infrastructure requirements are added, it would total 77,000 army personnel. This represents a threshold level below which it could not be said that a corps is deployable from Europe. Even at this level these maneuver brigades would have to redeploy to Europe and join their equipment-holding units before further deploying out of Europe in a crisis response mode, further eroding the small time differential between deploying from Europe or the United States (see figure 6).

In a similar manner, the air component could be reduced by moving the equivalent of one combat wing back to the United States and reconfiguring the remainder as shown in figure 7.

Type of Aircraft	# of Squadrons	Mission
F15C/D	2	Air superiority
F15E	2	Interdiction/strike
F16C/D	4	Multirole fighter

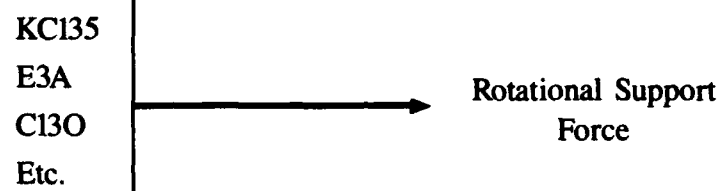


Fig. 7. Air Component of the 120,000 Residual Force

Notably absent from this force level is a close air support squadron of A10s. These reduced air forces would also have a significantly lower presence along NATO's southern flank, the region of most likely instability. Furthermore, although this force package could operate in the entire spectrum of combat, it would do so with significantly reduced capabilities to deploy and sustain operations in other nearby theaters. This is the threshold level of air forces below which a sustainable combat capability outside Europe is not credible. Even at this level extensive augmentation from CONUS-based crisis response forces is needed for extended operations.

Assuming no reduction in the small maritime component, the threshold level is composed as illustrated in figure 8.

Army	77,000
Air Force	30,000
Naval Forces	13,000
<hr/>	
Total	120,000

Fig. 8. The Threshold 120,000 Residual Force Level

This threshold level of 120,000 is a remarkably high presence when compared with the administration's requested 150,000 personnel. It is not surprising, however, when the magnitude of the task is recalled: Maintaining and deploying from Central Europe a corps-level combat capability (with associated air forces) is a Herculean effort, attempted only three times since World War II. In the Gulf War, U.S. dependence on allied logistical support was immense in the VII Corps deployment; it required 334 trains and 385 barges to get the corps to North Sea ports, and 107 convoys of ships and 413 aircraft sorties to complete the move to Saudi Arabia.¹⁴ Unfortunately, this is the best route for forces located in Central Europe.

It is also doubtful whether a reduction of only 30,000 will generate significant resource savings. The best estimates available on the cost of maintaining U.S. forces in Europe versus CONUS show a ratio of 12 to 10.¹⁵ Leaving aside the problematic issue of allied cost sharing, the savings from a reduction to the threshold level would be a minuscule fraction of the overall cost of the residual U.S. presence in Europe. Viewed in this context, the issue is really very straightforward: Does the United States need a "capable corps" as part of its presence in Europe? If it does, then the administration's position is much more militarily effective than a threshold force, and only marginally more expensive. The real issue is whether the United States needs such a capability in its presence forces, or whether a much smaller contingent can serve the same purpose under our new military strategy while simultaneously providing necessary leverage to ongoing political and diplomatic dialogues.

A Future Force Level of 75,000

Once it is clear that U.S. force levels will go below the threshold level for a "capable corps," it will be necessary to develop new criteria by which to judge the size and structure of future U.S. presence needed in Europe. Returning to the premises of this paper, the criteria should be based on what those forces are expected to do within each region in the roles they are expected to fulfill and the military missions they must be prepared to execute. The analysis thus far posits three roles, but not in sufficient specificity to serve as criteria. Simply stating that forward presence forces must fulfill U.S. commitments to NATO is inadequate. How are these forces going to be used by NATO and what missions will they likely be given there?

Most planning in this regard remains classified. NATO defense ministers did approve and publish in December 1991 the "Principal Mission Elements" under which member nations are to harmonize national defense planning. These elements include the provision of "military support to crisis management" and "immediate military response to attacks."¹⁶

Responding to realistic situations of crisis management within Europe, at least four different types of missions can be posited in some detail:

- Defense against threats from the south. The Mediterranean Basin faces challenges to its stability stemming from resurgent religious fundamentalism and ethno-nationalism, growing economic disparities, major demographic shifts, and the proliferation of missiles and other high-technology weapons. Already, treaty members have faced threats from this quarter. In April 1986, following the punitive U.S. airstrike against Libya, a Libyan patrol boat fired two missiles at a U.S. Coast Guard station on the Italian island of Lampedusa. The missiles did not hit their intended target, but the Italian ambassador to NATO announced subsequently in a Council meeting that, if later attacks found their mark, Italy would invoke Article V of the NATO treaty. During the Gulf War, NATO deployed forces, including Patriot missiles and F15 aircraft, to Turkey in OPERATION SOUTHERN GUARD to defend that NATO member against possible Iraqi retaliation.
- Internal instabilities. Addressing civil wars or other instabilities in Europe is more problematic for NATO forces, unless the Alliance becomes a security arm for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Yugoslavia has, however, shown the potential for local conflict to spill over into other parts of Europe. In such circumstances, NATO forces, even under U.N. or CSCE auspices, might be the only forces capable of performing peacemaking, as opposed to peacekeeping, operations if Europe decides to act forcefully.
- Security guarantees and interstate wars. The same forces of ethno-nationalism, economic deprivation and migration that threaten stability within nations of central and eastern Europe could also lead toward full-scale wars along the borders between them. If political consensus is possible, which is far from certain, NATO reaction forces could deter such attack by border guarantees and the threat of immediate involvement. While an extreme example, it highlights the objective fact that no other forces in Europe could now, or in the foreseeable future, undertake such peacekeeping operations credibly. Eastern European leaders have instinctively recognized this, accounting for their earnest desires to become part of the NATO alliance.
- Out-of-area operations. As noted earlier, the Gulf War has become the prototypical example of NATO forces operating effectively together outside of Europe. The range of operations conducted in the Gulf, from high-tech combat and enforcement of economic sanctions to humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, reflects the likely future, albeit realistically only in regions adjacent to Europe whose security impinges on that of the continent.

Thus, whether the mission given NATO forces will be countering external threats to member nations along the southern flank or the more problematic mission of damping instabilities internal to Europe (in or out of area, directly under NATO or indirectly under CSCE), it is most likely that U.S. forces, if involved, will do so as part of NATO's immediate or rapid reaction forces. In this context, from the perspective of theater planning, several principles should strongly influence both the composition and the location of residual U.S. forces:

- U.S. residual forces should be designed to provide maximum political leverage through the transition period (to the end of the decade) and in any use of military force, particularly in crisis management roles. This means participating in all NATO commands and force echelons that will be a "part of the action" early in any crisis sequence;
- There should also be the capability, at least through the end of the decade, for U.S. presence in Europe to be rapidly expandable if unforeseen contingencies occur in the region;
- U.S. forces should draw from their unique military competencies, providing those military capabilities not available from allies, such as intelligence and communications support, missile defenses, interoperable maritime forces and intertheater airlift. This means far fewer U.S. combat formations than in the past and more theater-level support organizations;
- Necessary support to U.S. forces should never be endangered. Both in peace and war, U.S. forces must be sized and situated to be provided the training and logistical support they are due, by coalition means if possible, but ensured in all cases; and
- U.S. presence forces should be geographically situated such that their demonstration of U.S. commitment is made visible, with priority to NATO flanks, close to regions of potential instability.

Based on the above principles, and working from the bottom up, can U.S. forces in Europe be structured in the future to accomplish the three roles posited for residual U.S. forces? Understanding that likely missions for crisis avoidance/crisis management call for smaller, more flexible and transportable forces, the land component could be structured as follows:

- one brigade/regiment-sized task force stationed on NATO's southern flank in Italy, committed as is the current SETAF unit, to NATO's *Immediate Reaction Force*;

- one brigade/regiment-sized task force stationed in the United Kingdom, committed to the ACE Rapid Reaction Corps, and colocated for training/interoperability purposes with the British division committed to the same corps; and
- two brigade/regiment-sized elements stationed in Germany, each as a one-third slice of a combat division, the remainder of which has its equipment stored in Europe. These two units would be stationed at permanent training facilities, such as Vilseck, Hohenfels and Baumholder, not only ensuring the training proficiency of all residual U.S. forces, but also facilitating U.S. leadership in an area of unique military competence — training simulations that use facilities and exercises for the combined integration of land and air power. Furthermore, these two brigades/regiments and their associated planning cells from parent divisions (two) and corps (one) would maintain the U.S. commitment to NATO's Main Defense Forces. As NATO's needs evolve further, main defense forces will likely decline in importance, at which time the U.S. presence forces could be further adjusted toward increased participation in the early reaction echelons.

It appears these four elements can be configured around 5,000 personnel each, given the need for "force multipliers" such as the multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) and combat aviation to be part of the task forces. Allowing 1,000 each for the division planning cells, and 2,000 for the corps cell, this totals in all 24,000 for army combat formations in Europe.

The air force component of this smaller residual force similarly would have to adopt a dual-based concept for some of its forces to retain the minimum essential combat capabilities described in the threshold force (to accept lower capabilities would negate the reasons to base any air forces in Europe), but the capabilities could be retained at roughly the same level as the army, around 24,000. For instance, one F15E squadron and one F16 squadron could be identified to be permanently based in the United States but to maintain a dual commitment in NATO similar to the rotational combat multipliers already in theater. Furthermore, some headquarters personnel, such as intelligence and targeting specialists, could be reduced and their functions transferred to allied headquarters. These assets and associated personnel, although permanently based in the United States, would conduct frequent training and forward presence rotations to air bases in Europe, preferably in the southern region. These air forces could be considered NATO forces for operational planning and tasking.

If the maritime component remains at 13,000, there would be an additional 14,000 personnel for theater-level support to U.S. residual forces, to NATO headquarters, and to other multinational organizations. Given the significant decrease in U.S. combat formations, particularly army, this 14,000 support slice would be adequate, composing 19 percent of the total, as opposed to 12 percent in the administration's 150,000 proposal. As illustrated in figure 9, these forces would add up to 75,000.

Army	24,000
Air Force	24,000
Naval Forces	13,000
• Support	14,000
<hr/>	
Total	75,000

Fig. 9. The Future 75,000 Residual Force

Returning to the three missions originally posited, it should be clear that the “presence role” can be met effectively by this reduced structure. Recalling the earlier discussion, the key to presence under U.S. military strategy is the credibility with which allies and potential adversaries view our total capability. Combat formations of the size of brigade task forces and air squadrons, trained to full readiness because of where they are stationed, and exercised regularly with reinforcing parent units as has been done for the past 40 years, will easily fulfill that role in the new environment. More importantly, these formations can be the U.S. commitment to NATO’s reaction forces, placing U.S. leverage where it is most advantageous in future NATO missions for crisis avoidance/crisis management.

Additionally, U.S. commitments to NATO force structure (the second role of U.S. residual forces) can be accomplished with this residual force. The only question might be whether the two brigades in Germany, along with division and corps planning cells, will fulfill U.S. commitments to the multinational corps structure of NATO’s Main Defense Force. At least two historical precedents indicate they will serve quite well in representing U.S. military interests in allied planning at necessary levels: the British Army of the Rhine during the last decade, and the U.S. forward planning cell of III U.S. Corps planning and exercising the allied reinforcement of the Northern Army Group (NORTHAG) during the same period.

As for the third role, deploying as crisis response forces out of Europe, admittedly there will be no corps level capability immediately available. With the exception of the Middle East, there is little indication that such a large capability will be needed in any nearby region in the foreseeable future.¹⁷ Given the unique situation, and the unique U.S. role in the Middle East, U.S. presence forces for that region will have to be structured carefully, largely in low visibility naval and air capabilities and prepositioned equipment that

facilitates rapid reintroduction of U.S. ground forces, if needed. As noted earlier, since the timing is roughly similar, whether those forces come from the continental United States or from Europe is largely inconsequential except for consideration of U.S. operational security and for political leverage on allies. Again, brigade task forces and air squadrons create sufficient capability and visibility to serve both purposes, particularly if this military role is exercised frequently with friendly nations in the Middle East. Also, as noted earlier, U.S. naval and air forces in Europe, given their rapid deployability, can meet any early need for U.S. deployment out of area, as necessary, to be followed by the smaller, more easily transportable brigade task forces.










In each of these three roles — U.S. forward presence, support to NATO, and crisis response out of area — all U.S. forces can be expected increasingly to embody those advanced military capabilities manifested during the Gulf War. Many believe that the capabilities so displayed in that war are the beginning of a military-technical revolution of historic proportions, a revolution manifest in three integrated spheres: advances in applied military technology, advances in military operational concepts, and new organizational adaptations that optimize such advances.

If it is true that the U.S. is leading the way in such a revolution, then it is equally true that most advances to date have occurred in the area of applied military technology. The ability of U.S. forces in the Gulf to dominate the electronic spectrum, and to orchestrate the air and ground campaigns through integrated C⁴I (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence) applications are but two examples. As operational concepts are developed for the new security environment, forces for U.S. forward presence can be expected to be highly lethal yet much smaller, much more strategically flexible, and organized in ways quite different than during the Cold War. In this context, the combined-arms, brigade-sized forces recommended here are organizations yet to be fully implemented.

In sum, each of the force levels reviewed can fulfill all three roles now envisioned for residual U.S. forces in Europe. The 75,000 level does not provide a "capable corps" in any role without returning dual-based units to Europe but in the interim can execute all anticipated military missions.

More important is the final implication. It is not clear that this particular force level of 75,000 is the only composition of U.S. forces that can fulfill the posited roles and likely military missions for U.S. presence forces in Europe. Innovative thinking by military planners, unconstrained by the outdated conventions of the Cold War, is urgently needed. What is clear, however, is that the United States must be prepared to keep a force of roughly 75,000 in Europe for the indefinite future if we are going to act in our own interests under our own national military strategy (that is, to have an effective presence in the European region). The national consensus to do that should be created now to provide the kind of stability in presence so necessary to U.S. credibility.

Force Levels

	Base Case: 150,000	Threshold Case: 120,000	Future Case: 75,000
Roles			
Provide U.S. Forward Presence			
Support NATO Mission (NATO Region)			 a
Project U.S. Crisis Response (Out of Area)			 a

a. Does not provide a capable corps for this role without reinforcement of Europe.

Fig. 10. Completed Analysis Matrix

Conclusion

This paper proceeds from two premises: First, any residual U.S. forces in Europe should be designed to fulfill certain roles and missions, and debate about such forces should focus primarily on these uses of military force, and only secondarily on affordability; second, future U.S. deployments overseas should be designed with a clear conception of the newly approved U.S. military strategy. In particular, planning should focus on the specific roles and missions that presence forces are to accomplish, and such forces should then be structured uniquely within each region to accomplish those future missions.

The argument made here is that the United States can accomplish three requisite roles in the European region with a residual force significantly different in size, composition and organization from that now planned. The three roles are:

- providing U.S. forward military presence in the region (giving political and economic leverage in peacetime and being the forward edge of a seamless response from the United States if crisis response forces are needed for crisis management);
- fulfilling U.S. commitments to NATO integrated military structure now focused on crisis management rather than defense and war-fighting; and
- projecting U.S. military power out of the European region in a "contingency response" role to a crisis in neighboring regions.

The presence force proposed here contains roughly 75,000 personnel, about one-half of the administration's proposal. Because the Cold War is over, major combat formations are absent in the land component and residual elements are situated quite differently from what is now planned, while the air component is only slightly reduced and the maritime component remains the same. The emphasis is on visibility in the portions of the region where presence is needed and flexibility with rapidly transportable formations. In this regard, the main defense forces of NATO are not considered nearly so critical, either for purposes of political leverage or for providing military support to crisis management operations, as are NATO's immediate and rapid response echelons. This is not to conclude that such a substantial change in U.S. presence in Europe should occur next year. This paper envisions a period of political-military transition to the end of the decade. Unless the security environment changes in a manner unforeseen, a force such as proposed here should be planned carefully from the bottom up and in place toward the end of the decade.

The presence force of 75,000 recommended here is not the only one that can execute the posited roles and missions under the new national military strategy. Innovative thinking by military planners will undoubtedly provide others as we move further from Cold War thinking and as more of the emerging military-technical revolution is implemented in future forces. Regardless of exact composition, however, it is clear that the United States must maintain a force of roughly 75,000 in Europe for the foreseeable future. The United States must have stability in its visible presence if it is to pursue credibly its own national interests under the new U.S. national military strategy.

ENDNOTES

1. See letter from Representative Les Aspin, chairman, House Armed Services Committee, to Representative Leon Panetta, chairman, House Budget Committee, February 26, 1992, in which Aspin recommended a reduction of \$12-15 billion from the administration's request. Also see letter from Senator Sam Nunn, chairman, Senate Armed Services Committee, to Senators Jim Sasser and Pete Domenici, chairman and ranking minority member, respectively, of the Senate Committee on the Budget, March 24, 1992, in which Nunn "could not recommend" significant reductions to the president's FY 93 budget level, but stated that he "believe{s} that significant savings could be made in the following years."
2. Robert Gates, "Statement of the Director of Central Intelligence before the Senate Armed Services Committee," January 22, 1992, (mimeograph copy), p. 4.
3. For a more complete discussion of the potential roles of military force in a presence role, see Robert Art, "A Defensible Defense," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Spring 1991): pp. 3-53.
4. General Colin L. Powell, "Statement of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before the Committee on the Budget, U.S. Senate," February 3, 1992 (mimeograph copy), pp. 7-8.
5. Ambassador David M. Abshire, "Statement before the House Committee on Armed Services," December 11, 1991 (mimeograph copy), p. 5.
6. For example, see *The Atlantic Alliance Transformed* by former Ambassadors David M. Abshire, Richard B. Burt and R. James Woolsey, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1992).
7. Jim Blackwell, Michael Mazarr, Don Snider, *The Gulf War: Military Lessons Learned* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 1991), pp. 5-9.
8. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy of the United States* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1992), p. 21.
9. John Lancaster, "Nunn Proposes Five-Year Defense Cut of \$85 Billion," *The Washington Post* (March 25, 1992), p. A4.
10. General John Galvin, USCINCEUR, "Statement before the House Armed Services Committee," March 24, 1992 (mimeograph copy), pp. 7-8.

11. *National Military Strategy*, p. 21.
12. Blackwell, Mazarr, Snider, *The Gulf War*, pp. 7-9.
13. During OPERATION DESERT SHIELD/STORM, U.S. forces had to compete for available German rail assets with other allied forces, civilian industry, farmers moving harvest to market, and the transportation of goods to eastern Germany following reunification. Past efficiencies of the *Deutsche Bundesbahn* had virtually eliminated excess rail stock and any corresponding "surge" capacity. Even though peak U. S. military demand for rail stock rarely exceeded 30 per day (about .1 percent of the total volume), it was difficult for the German government to meet even this modest demand. See Major David A. Davis, "Rail Movement Control in USAREUR," TWI Project for 21st Theater Army Area Command, HQ U.S. Army Europe, Heidelberg, May 6, 1991.
14. HQ USEUCOM, "Perspectives on the Gulf War" (pamphlet), March 1991, p. 11.
15. HQDA, Information Paper, Subject: Cost Comparison (March 11, 1992), p. 1. A comparison of total operating costs for a generic mechanized division based in either Europe or the continental United States (with identical manning, readiness and operational tempo) produced a differential of 10 to 20 percent greater costs in U.S. Army, Europe as compared to the United States.
16. NATO Press Release, "Military Guidance for the Implementation of the Alliance's Strategic Concept" (mimeograph), pp. 1-2.
17. Gates, "Statement of the Director," p. 3.